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Unraveling

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Unraveling

by Margaret Okere

Every month the moon swallows itself.
 Every day the things I do
 with my woman's hands
 come undone. Each meal cooked,
 eaten. The morning bed made,
 unmade at night. One dish washed,
 two more to replace it. Yellow shirt
 laundered and ironed until thin.
 My daughter's braided black hair,
 uncombed each night.
 The baby bathed
 and bathed again.
 Even in my dreams,
 I sweep.

What a pleasure to make
 something that lasts. A house.
 A field harvested but once a year
 baskets overflowing with corn.
 A poem.

Yet if things did not unravel,
 would I taste sweet peppers only once,
 smell an orchid only once,
 swing the baby to my hip only once,
 see the sunlight on my daughter's hair
 only once,

hear your footsteps coming to our bed
 only once in the dark night, children
 asleep.

From the center of our desire are moons born.